

# In Memoriam: Anthony Staros

July 17, 1923—July 20, 2008



Anthony (Tony) Staros was a pioneer in post-World War II prosthetics, orthotics, and assistive technologies for half a century—beginning in the 1950s and continuing into the early 2000s. The rehabilitation community lost a dedicated and talented leader when he died on July 20, 2008, in New York City (NYC) at the age of 84.

After serving as a First Lieutenant in the Marines during World War II (WWII) and completing two masters degrees in engineering (at Massachusetts Institute of Technology before WWII and at Cornell, Stanford, and Hofstra after WWII), he became a licensed professional engineer in New York State and joined the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 1950. After retiring in 1981, he worked in private practice in prosthetics and orthotics in NYC and also actively consulted for the World Rehabilitation Fund into the early 2000s.

In 1956, Staros established the first comprehensive rehabilitation technology facility, the VA Prosthetics Center (VAPC) in NYC. The VAPC combined a working clinic with the rehabilitation, development, and evaluation efforts already in place and encompassed orthopedic medicine, physical therapy, bioengineering, prosthetics, orthotics, facial restora-

tion, and assistive technologies. The VAPC performed the primary research on the 27,000 veterans with amputations coming out of WWII, and it was the national focal point for veterans with severe disabilities to obtain unique, custom-engineered, and fabricated prosthetics, orthotics, orthopedic shoes, and other assistive technologies.

In the early 1960s, Staros co-developed one of the early lower-limb prosthetic alignment jigs, known as the Staros-Gardner coupling. Also, working with Dr. Martin Mussman in the 1970s, Staros began development of the VA Custom Orthopedic Footwear Program, which eventually provided custom orthopedic footwear for 24,000 veterans each year.

Staros was also very proud of his role as one of the original founders of RESNA (Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America) in the late 1970s. He presided over the 1979 founding meeting in Atlanta that launched RESNA and supported Jim Reswick as the Society's first president. RESNA's professional membership stood at 1,400 in early 2009.

In 1964, Staros founded a new publication, the *Bulletin of Prosthetics Research*, to publish the results of the Center's VA research. It was published for the next 18 years, paving the way for the expanded, peer-reviewed *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*, which began publication in 1983 and has continued to significantly contribute to the field of prosthetics by publishing current research.

**James McAleer, MA**

